



Focus on University of Miami

With applications rising steadily from an increasingly strong applicant pool, University of Miami has an academic reputation to boast about. Roughly half of the current freshmen graduated in the top 5% of their high school class, and more than two-thirds of them in the top 10%. Sixty percent are from out of state, attracted by the unusually diverse course offerings and opportunities as much as by the beautiful weather and famous school spirit.

A mid-size university with 9,500 undergraduates and 4,500 graduate students, Miami offers 180 majors, more per student than any other school in the U.S., they proudly report. Many students take a second major and/or a minor, often in more than one of the 9 schools. These schools are Architecture, Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Communication, Education and Human Development, Engineering, Marine and Atmospheric Science, Music, and Nursing and Health Studies.

Among the more unusual undergraduate majors are Music Business, Music Engineering Technology and Music Therapy, and Marine Affairs and Meteorology. Top students may also pursue dual degree programs in medicine (7 or 8 years), Marine Geology (5 years), Latin American Studies (5 years), Law (6 years), Exercise Physiology (5 years), and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (6 years).

Miami students are a particularly active and happy group. The school attracts (and admissions officers are looking for) well-rounded students with balance in their lives, serious about academics and also involved in activities in or out of school. Community service is highly valued. In fact, all freshmen are placed in a group of seven or eight students with whom they work on a community service project.

Seventy travel abroad programs of varying lengths are available, including some non-traditional ones where a Miami professor travels with a group of students to pursue a particular course of study in the Galapagos Islands, Prague, Rome, and Galilee.

Diversity is a hallmark of the university, where students come from all fifty states and 110 countries and represent an ethnic mix, with 28% identifying as Hispanic and only 50% identifying as white. About 50% of the students receive merit scholarships, and nearly 80% receive financial aid. Applicants with a 4.0 or higher GPA and 1400 or higher on the first two sections of the SAT are invited into an Honors College.

All freshmen live on campus in residence halls with a faculty family as well as upperclassmen resident advisors who plan social events. Approximately 34% of students join fraternities and sororities, but rushing does not begin until the second semester. Housing is not guaranteed for all four years, but is generally available for those who want it as many opt to move to nearby off-campus apartments in their later years.

Division 1 sports teams are major a source of community pride, and all students receive free tickets to the football games. Prominent guest speakers are also common on campus, perhaps drawn in part by President Donna Shalala, formerly Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Clinton. Recent speakers have included Hillary Clinton, former President Bill Clinton, the Dali Lama, and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Sotomayor.

Applicants are admitted directly to a major, but they are admitted to the university first, so if they do not meet criteria for their first choice major, they may be admitted to another related one. A portfolio is required for entrance to the School of Architecture and an audition is required for entrance to Theater Arts and all programs in the School of Music.

Other than that, some majors are more selective than others. Nursing is quite selective here as in most schools. Neuroscience is one of the more popular and more selective majors in the College of Arts and Sciences, requiring a minimum Critical Reading and Math SAT of 1350. However students who are not admitted to it directly may transfer in after the first year if their grades are sufficiently high.

Engineering students need not decide what type of engineering they wish to major in until after they've taken a survey of all types, and they need not have taken any particular courses in high school in order to be considered for the program.

Both the SAT and the ACT are super-scored, meaning the computer automatically shows admissions officers your top scores for each section. The writing section of the SAT is not used. For the class that entered in 2013, median Critical Reading and Math were 1270 to 1410, and median ACTs were 29 to 32. In general, the SAT must be a minimum of 1200 for an applicant to

be considered, and that would be an admissible score only if the GPA were quite high. The lower the GPA, the higher the test score required for admission. The acceptance rate for students entering in the fall of 2013 was 39%.

